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CHANNEL: n/a
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RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO	OCT-00	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-10	CIAE-00	DODE-00	H-01
	NSC-05	NSAE-00	HA-06	L-03	PM-09	PA-01	ICAE-00
	SP-02	SPRS-02	/061 W				

-----025775 302022Z /52

R 301358Z DEC 81
 FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1482
 INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
 AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 AMEMBASSY ROME
 AMEMBASSY SOFIA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUCHAREST 9255

E.O. 12065: GDS 12/30/87 (FRY, SAMUEL E.) OR-M
 TAGS: PINT, PINS, AL, RO
 SUBJECT: DEATH OF ALBANIAN PREMIER MEHMET SHEHU

REF: A. BELGRADE 10070 (NOTAL), (B) SOFIA 3508 (NOTAL)

1. (C) SUMMARY: THERE IS SOME ROMANIAN DOUBT ABOUT THE SHEHU SUICIDE STORY. A PRINCIPAL WESTERN "ALBANIAN WATCHER" IN BUCHAREST, THE FINNISH EMBASSY, SHEDS LITTLE LIGHT ON THE QUESTION. THE ROMANIAN PRESS HAS THUS FAR IGNORED THE EVENT. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE ROMANIAN PRESS HAS NOT MENTIONED THE DEATH OF ALBANIAN PREMIER MEHMET SHEHU. THE LAST MENTION HERE OF SHEHU WAS IN "SCINTEIA" ON DECEMBER 17 IN A REPORT ON THE VISIT (DECEMBER 16 AND 17) OF ROMANIAN FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER CORNEL BURTICA TO TIRANA FOR THE SIGNING OF THE 1982 ROMANIAN-ALBANIAN TRADE PROTOCOL. BURTICA CALLED ON SHEHU AND, "IN A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE," HAD "TALKS ABOUT DEVELOPING ECONOMIC

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RELATIONS." REPORTEDLY WITH SHEHU WERE ALBANIAN FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER NOLIN MOXHA AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER REIS MALILE.

3. (C) DURING A DECEMBER 28 CALL ON THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, THE AMBASSADOR, AMONG OTHER TOPICS,

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MENTIONED SHEHU'S "DEATH." THE MINISTER QUICKLY PICKED UP ON THE WORD SAYING "I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU USED THE WORD 'DEATH", "THUS IMPLYING SOME HIGH LEVEL ROMANIAN DOUBT OVER THE SUICIDE STORY.

4. (C) THE FINNISH AMBASSADOR IN BUCHAREST IS ACCREDITED TO TIRANA. THE FINNISH DCM VISITED TIRANA IN LATE NOVEMBER. IN COMMENTING TO US ABOUT SHEHU'S DEATH, HE SAID THAT DURING THE VISIT HE TALKED WITH GREEK, KNECH, EGYPTIAN, ITALIAN AND TURKISH COLLEAGUES RESIDENT IN TIRANA. NOT ONE OF THEM EVEN ALLUDED TO ANY POSSIBLE SHEHU PROBLEMS, SHAKE-UP RUMORS, OR POWER SHIFTS. THE FINNISH EMBASSY HERE HAD NO EXPLANATION FOR THE EVENT, NOTING ITS IMPRESSION THAT SHEHU'S COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND POLITBURO POSITIONS HAD APPEARED SOLID AND THAT WHATEVER "YOUNGER INFLUENCES" WERE BEING FOLT IN ALBANIA, HE WAS STILL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MAJORITY POWER POSITIONS. THE COMMENTS OF THE ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR IN BUCHAREST REGARDING "NO CONDOLENCES, NO MOURNING, AND THE DISGRACE OF SUICIDE," APPEAR TO FOLLOW THE SAME LINE THE ALBANIANS ARE USING ELSEWHERE.
FUNDERBURK

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